

FOCUS

on Fort Smith

ARKANSAS

A Quarterly Newsletter by the City of Fort Smith

July, 2001

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conserve our natural resource

Time to be Water Wise

The hot, dry months of summer typically signal the need for water conservation measures in Fort Smith and the surrounding areas. Wise use of this natural resource helps ensure that there's enough water to meet basic human needs now and in the future.

The following water conservation measures became effective June 1:

- ❖ Outdoor watering is permitted only before 10 a.m. and after 7 p.m.
- ❖ Lawn watering, car washing and swimming pool filling are on the odd/even system. Addresses ending in even numbers may use water for these purposes only on even numbered days of the month. Addresses ending in odd numbers may use water for these

purposes only on odd numbered days of the month.

- ❖ No hosing off hard surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks and patios.

More stringent measures may apply or become necessary if water supply levels drop too low.

Water conservation is required by the federal permits issued for Fort Smith's water supply projects. Persons convicted of violating these measures are subject to fines of \$50 to \$500.

By following these common-sense measures, you can help ensure adequate water supplies for keeping your yard looking nice and still preserving our future generation's resources.

Citizens to Benefit from New Center

The county-wide sales tax approved by the voters in 1994 promised a new senior citizens center in the southern part of Fort Smith during the 10-year life of the tax. That promise will be kept this summer with the opening of the new Fort Smith Senior Activities Center at South 28th Street and Cavanaugh Road.

While this center is located in the southern part of Fort Smith, the services provided will benefit all seniors in the city. At 14,000 square feet, the center is large enough to hold congregate meals,



provide special services and programs to benefit seniors and even host social activities such as dances and musical programs.

other areas of the city and the offices of the Sebastian Retired Citizens Association (SRCA). As with the city's

The center has space for fitness activities geared toward the active senior. It also houses a full kitchen to provide meal services for seniors living in

See Center, page 2

Fort Smith Transit Keeps on Growing!

How am I going to get to my new job?

How can I get to the doctor's office next week?

*How can I send my children to the swimming pool
for recreation?*

If you're asking these type of questions, then public transit is definitely for YOU!!! Because of increasing demand for transit services, the Fort Smith transit department has announced the addition of 5 new routes. The routes will expand service into areas of Fort Smith previously unserved by fixed routes.

Ridership on Fort Smith's transit buses has increased 1200% over the last 5 years. The transit department now provides over 12,000 rides each month.

For a one-way fare of \$1, passengers can travel to most parts of Fort Smith with the extensive coverage the new and existing routes provide.

The new routes will operate during peak times from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The 4 existing routes and

demand-response service will continue to operate from 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday - Friday and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays. The last transfer is available at 6 p.m.

Transit manager **Ken Savage** reports that the expanded routes are being supported by the Crawford/Sebastian County TEA Coalition (Bridges to Opportunities), the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, the City of Fort Smith and the Federal Transit Administration.

Transit route maps and schedules are available by calling 783-6464 or visiting the city's website at www.fsark.com and clicking on the transit department.

**PUBLIC TRANSIT IS FOR
EVERYONE!!**

***Whatever you want to do, do it now. There are only so many
tomorrows.***

---Michael Landon

HOT News - Insurance Premiums Lower in Fort Smith

Fort Smith property owners and citizens benefit from the class 2 fire insurance rating the city has achieved. The rating is made by the independent Insurance Services Organization and is based on the city's firefighting capabilities. Ratings are made on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the best rating possible.

Rating factors include the number, types and age of firefighting apparatus, firefighter staffing levels, response times, water

system capabilities, communications systems and firefighter training. Fire chief **Jerry Tomlin** reports that Fort Smith's recent rating improvement is a result of the following:

- * increased staffing
- * replacement of aging fire trucks
- * construction of fire station 10 to serve south Fort Smith
- * and improvements to the city's water utilities department.

The class 2 rating saves

property owners premium costs when they purchase property insurance. It also lets the community know that the fire department is well prepared to handle fires and other emergencies

Fort Smith is among the best rated fire departments in Arkansas. Little Rock, North Little Rock and Searcy are the only other Arkansas cities with class 2 ratings. No cities in the Natural State have attained a class 1 rating.

Senior Center, from page 1

Baker Senior Citizens Center, the SRCA will operate this facility through a management agreement with the City of Fort Smith.

The cost of this center was \$1.4 million with additional funding provided by SRCA for kitchen equipment and other furnishings. The center was designed by architect James Childers and built by Cavanal Constructors Inc.

It's in your Hands...Pitch-In



The city's solid waste task force has successfully implemented curbside recycling and household hazardous waste collection programs in Fort Smith. The 10-member group is now taking on a project very important to the community's appearance.

The task force has begun work to improve the litter problem around Fort Smith by discussing problems, resources and needs. The next step is to develop strategies for reducing litter alongside roadways and other areas.

Several organizations including Keep Fort Smith Beautiful with Pride, Keep Arkansas Beautiful, the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, Sebastian County and the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce are participating in the litter reduction effort. City departments including sanitation, police, code enforcement and streets are also involved.

Residents are encouraged to submit their ideas on how to reduce littering in the city. Suggestions may be sent to Phyllis Mooney by one of the following:

- * phone number - 784-2329
- * mailing address - 5900 Commerce Rd., Fort Smith, AR 72916
- * Internet- www.fsark.com/litter

**Please help us keep Fort Smith
beautiful with pride!!!**

Master Gardeners Lend A Green Thumb

Fort Smith's newly opened convention center at 800 Rogers Avenue has magnificently landscaped grounds. Care and maintenance of the plantings require expertise and considerable labor.

Much of the landscaping maintenance on the 18-acre convention center campus is being provided by the River Valley Master Gardeners at no cost to the city. The gardeners plant the beds of annual flowers and tend to the hundreds of shrubs and other landscaping. Turf and tree maintenance is provided by the parks and recreation department.

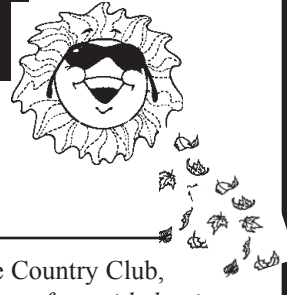
In exchange for its landscape maintenance contributions, the master gardeners receive free use of the convention center exhibit hall for the annual lawn and garden show. The show attracts thousands seeking ideas to improve their homes and yards.

The city's partnership with the River Valley Master Gardeners provides expert care of the convention center grounds and serves the citizens of Fort Smith well.

One can never
consent to
creep when one
feels an impulse
to soar.

--Helen Keller

Community Celebrations

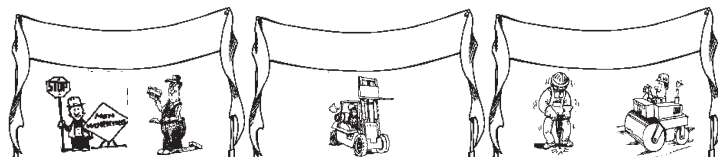


Fort Smith's season of festivals continues as the hot days of summer give way to autumn. Your attendance supports many worthwhile community organizations. Here's a lineup of festivals of which *THE FOCUS* is aware:

Fort Smith Classic on the Buy.com national golf tour	Aug. 6-12	Hardscrabble Country Club, 484-9304, www.fortsmithclassic.com
Summer Fest 2001	Aug. 17-18	Variety of musical performers, River Park, Admission: \$35 for 1 day or \$51 for 2 day pass, 785-9304
11 th Annual Riverfront Blues Festival	Sept. 7-8	River Park, 783-6353 www.riverfrontbluesfest.org
Arkansas Oklahoma State Fair	Sept. 21-29	Livestock exposition, carnival rides and games, entertainment, Kay Rodgers Park. Admission: \$4 Adults; \$1 children, 783-6176 www.kayrogerspark.com
Riverfront Market	Sept. 28-30	Fine crafts, art, antiques, food, family fun. Admission: \$6 at the gate for 3 day pass (\$5 pre-admission); Free - children under 12, 452-1459 www.riverfrontmarket@mindspring.com
Oktoberfest	Oct. 12-13	Food, crafts, bands, dancing, family fun, 10201 Columbus Acres Rd., 785-4677
5 th Annual Scottish Border Games	Oct. 20	Celebration of Scottish heritage with Scottish athletics, music, dancing, food, Fort Smith Park, Admission: \$5 adults, \$1 children, 785-3889 www.scofs.org
Festival of Flowers	Oct. 20-21	Horticultural exhibits and tips, Westark College campus
6 th Annual Valley of the Arkansas Gathering	Oct. 26-28	USO dance, pow-wow and living history, Downtown Fort Smith, 783-8888

Ad Space

Public Works Employees of the Year



The City of Fort Smith recently named its public works employees of the year. The honorees were chosen by their 375 peers. They were recognized at a board of directors meeting and at a public works employee appreciation picnic.

John Beard is the utility department's 2001 employee of the year. Beard is an environmental technician, overseeing the sampling of industrial wastewater discharges. He is involved with charity in the community by working as a volunteer for the Fort Smith Classic golf tournament, fund raising for the Arkansas Children's Hospital, the Suddenly Las Vegas Casino Night, the Old Fort Days Rodeo and the Riverfront Blues Society.

The street and traffic control operations department's employee of the year is **Waymon Harris**. A mechanic, Harris is known for his dependability and his willingness to perform a wide variety of tasks. He's reliable and willing to work long hours when needed, particularly during disasters such as last winter's ice storm. Harris helps his co-workers any way possible, and is involved in the community with fund raising for the Kimmons Junior High School band. He also collects toys and stuffed animals for hospitalized children.

The 2001 sanitation department employee

of the year is **Robert Strickland**. Currently a landfill equipment operator, Strickland has worked in the sanitation department for 13 years. He's known for his exceptional knowledge of landfill operations. Strickland is very courteous to all landfill customers. His friendly disposition, fostering good workplace morale and his work knowledge have earned him recognition as the sanitation department employee of the year.

Jim West, engineering department employee of the year, is responsible for supervising the construction inspectors on Fort Smith's roadway and drainage projects. He's known for his ability to manage multiple projects while resolving construction problems promptly and decisively. Professionalism and responsiveness for addressing citizen's concerns are strong traits for Jim and have earned him the respect of his co-workers and the contractors.

The parks and recreation department's 2001 employee of the year is **Vernon Pulliam**. Pulliam is known as the "go to" person in the parks department because of his versatility. His skills help to ensure the city's swimming pool, wading pools and community centers are properly operating to meet the public's expectations. Pulliam's dedication and loyalty to the parks and

recreation department have resulted in his selection as employee of the year.

Last month, the Fort Smith Commissary Kiwanis Club recognized the five employees at an appreciation breakfast. The club also chose John Beard as the Fort Smith public works employee of the year. Beard received a plaque and a \$100 savings bond from the club.

THE FOCUS congratulates the 2001 public works employees of the year.



Buses Make Dandy Billboards

Motorists driving around Fort Smith have likely noticed moving billboards of people sitting on a bright green couch or a graphic proudly displaying a shooting star. The moving billboards are City of Fort Smith transit buses.

The transit bus advertisements provide businesses a unique, attractive and attention-getting method of reaching customers. The buses are seen by thousands of motorists six days a week while traveling thoroughfares, stopping at traffic lights, picking up customers or pulling into shopping centers and other popular locations throughout the city.

Transit bus advertising reaches more people per dollar invested than any other medium. The painted or vinyl wrapped buses grab customers' attention, build product/service awareness within days, are highly visible and have constant market penetration.

Information about advertising on Fort Smith transit buses is available by calling Lori Carr in the transit department at 494-7690.



embraces the motto "Commit to Get Fit", was designed by **Curtis Moore**.

Any business or individual desiring to promote healthy lifestyles may contact Jennifer Oberste in the mayor's office at 784-2437 or by e-mail at www.joberste@fsark.com

Let's Get Physical

In an effort to promote healthy lifestyles for Fort Smithians, Mayor **Ray Baker** has created the Mayor's Physical Fitness Commission. The 20-member commission develops grassroots solutions to the challenges facing the health of area citizens. The solutions address the importance of preventive medicine and physical fitness. The commission's approach focuses on the complete wellness of every citizen in the Fort Smith area.

Commission member **Patti Metcalf** reports that the program relies on the desire and commitment of Fort Smith citizens to make life-changing decisions about health and exercise in order to live longer and more productive lives. Every citizen is urged to get at least 30

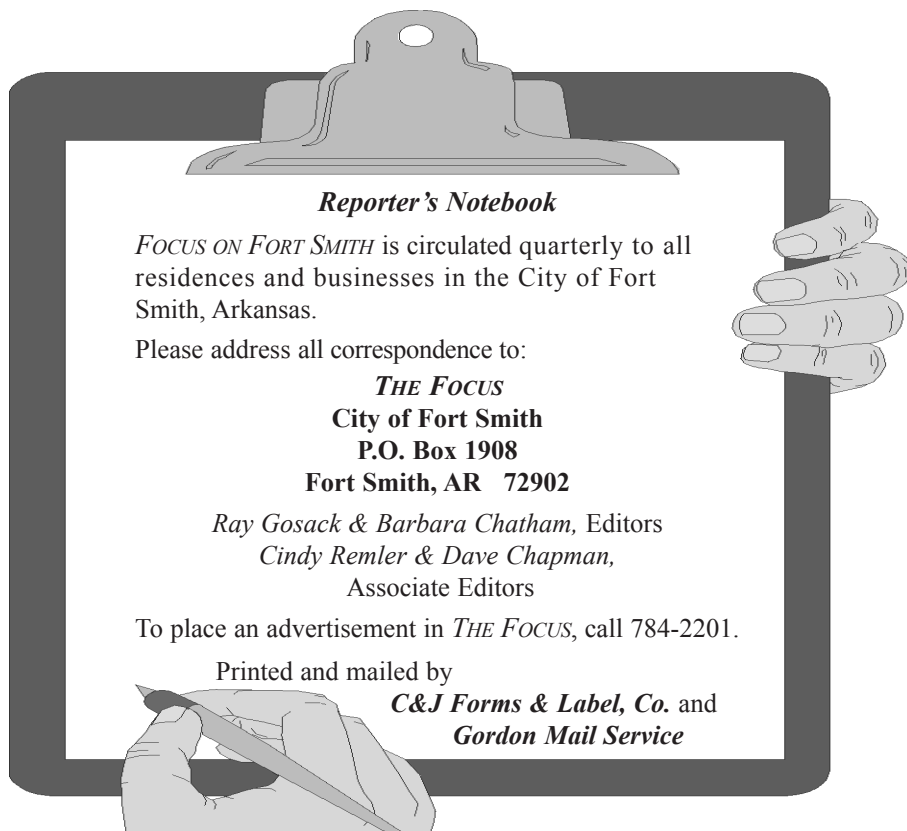


minutes of physical exercise daily.

One of the commission's first activities was to enlist the participation of local businesses to promote healthy habits among their employees. Participating employees make a personal commitment to exercise regularly, eat healthy and avoid use of harmful substances such as tobacco. Nearly 20 local companies and employers are already participating in the program.

The commission has also launched its Let's Get Physical 2001 Challenge. This is an 8-week, interactive program designed to help individuals establish a healthier and active lifestyle by participating in regular, moderate physical exercise and learning to make nutritious food choices. The challenge is a fun, non-competitive and educational program for persons of all ages and abilities.

The commission's logo, which



Questions - Problems - Complaints about City Services?

Fort Smith residents have a friend in City Hall: the Citizen Action Center, your one stop office for service and information if you do not know who to call for assistance, have a question or a suggestion or have a city-related problem that has not been solved by the appropriate department. It is designed to serve as a bridge between citizens and their local government.

The action center, established in 1987, is located in the city clerk's office and averages 700 inquiries per year. The center can save you time while trying to solve a problem on your own or frustration from unnecessary transfer calls from one department to another. It is committed to providing excellent service to the citizens.

Citizens are encouraged to first contact the appropriate department for the solution of a problem. For example, a pothole should be reported to the street department, a question regarding zoning should be directed to the planning department.

If you have a complaint or problem regarding a particular city service, the clerk's office contacts the appropriate city official/department and takes personal responsibility for getting a response. Through the action center, your question is answered as quickly as possible. If the complaint requires additional time, you will receive a status report until the problem is resolved or an explanation is provided.

Citizens are not the only ones who benefit from having the action center. It provides a valuable service to city officials by identifying possible problem areas with city services and also improves public relations.

Your call is important! The next time you need general information, have a question or complaint regarding city services, please contact the action center at 785-2800. The office hours are Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Calls received after hours and weekends will be returned on the next business day.

Ad Space

Why Do I Need a Building Permit???

Do-it-yourselfers often forget an important step when undertaking a building project – the need to obtain a building permit. Building permits serve many valuable purposes. The regulation of building construction can be traced through recorded history for over 4,000 years.

Building codes are written to help protect the public's safety. When followed, they slow or stop the spread of fire, help structures withstand the force of high winds such as those from tornadoes, and reduce or eliminate the damage caused by flooding. Building codes also protect against structural collapse.

Another benefit of building codes is that they help to maintain property values. Buildings which are properly constructed are less likely to deteriorate. This protects the property

owner's investment in his/her building and the values of other nearby properties.

Fort Smith has adopted nationally-recognized building codes. The codes are enforced through the issuance of permits by the building department.

Building permits are needed for a wide variety of projects such as:

- storage buildings
- decks
- carports
- porches
- swimming pools
- signs
- re-roofs
- remodeling
- any electrical, plumbing or heating/air projects

Failure to obtain a building permit when one is required results in a higher

building permit fee and the possibility that the work may have to be re-done if it doesn't meet the building codes.

The Fort Smith building department stands ready to assist property owners and contractors who have building code questions. Anyone who's unsure

whether or not their project requires a building permit should contact the building department before starting work.

The building department may be reached at 784-2206.

Or, you can visit its

web site at

www.fsark.com, click on

Departments, then Building Department, to learn more about building codes, permits, and inspections.



Fort Smith Family Makes New Park Possible

The newest addition to Fort Smith's parks inventory is Ross Pendergraft Park at 200 Garrison Avenue. The park was dedicated earlier this month, shortly after what would have been Ross Pendergraft's 76th birthday. Pendergraft was the long-time publisher of the Southwest Times Record newspaper and an ardent supporter of downtown Fort Smith.

The park features a pavilion suitable for small concerts and gatherings, nicely landscaped walkways and peaceful sitting areas. Construction of the park was made possible by a generous donation from the **Pendergraft** family. The family has also provided an endowment to make sure the park's maintenance needs are met.

The pavilion at Ross Pendergraft Park may be reserved for weddings and other special events by calling the parks and recreation department at 784-2368 or visiting its website at www.fsark.com/Parks.

Need Help With Your City Utility Bill?

Residential water, sewer and sanitation customers who meet income guidelines may qualify for reduced utility billings from the City of Fort Smith. The reduced billings, approved by the board of directors, help residents on limited incomes pay their water, sewer and sanitation charges.

The utility assistance program provides qualifying residents with a 19% discount on their sanitation billing and a 50% discount on their water and sewer billing. A typical participating residence saves \$96 per year. Actual savings depend on the household's amount of water usage.

To qualify for the program, a household's total annual income may not exceed \$13,000. The utility bill must be in the legal name of the qualifying applicant. Currently, 166 households take advantage of this program.

Applications for the utility assistance program are available at the Beckman Center, 2100 North 31st Street or by calling the city's utility billing department at 784-2261. Applications are reviewed and approved by the Sebastian Retired Citizens Association (SRCA). SRCA forwards approved applications to the city's utility billing department. Applicants must reapply for the program on an annual basis to ensure they still meet eligibility requirements.

For more information about Fort Smith's utility assistance program, please contact Beverlee Asbill in the customer service/utility billing department at 784-2261 or Flora Canoll of the Beckman Center at 785-0065.

Resting Place Of Fort Smith History

Oak Cemetery is one of Fort Smith's most historic places. Many who shaped Fort Smith and Arkansas history are interred at the cemetery. Governors, mayors, U.S. marshals, Civil War soldiers and many outlaws have been laid to rest there. The cemetery will serve as a final resting place for many generations to come.

Citizens interested in preserving and promoting the heritage of Oak Cemetery have formed the Oak Cemetery Association. The purpose of the association is to provide volunteer support for the preservation of the cemetery, fund raising activities, research, headstone repairs, museum volunteers and support for the annual Tales of the Crypt.

The Oak Cemetery Association will have a kickoff meeting on Tuesday, September 18th at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the River Park pavilion building, which is located on North B Street between North 2nd Street and Clayton Expressway. Anyone desiring to become an active member of the Oak Cemetery Association is encouraged to attend. More information is available by calling 452-7098.

Man's (and Woman's) Best Friend



Pets add many qualities to our lives. They keep us company, they protect our property and they provide assistance to those with special needs.

Most pet owners are responsible and properly care for their dogs and cats. However, pets sometimes become neighborhood nuisances.

The Fort Smith police department enforces all city ordinances and laws pertaining to animal control. Five animal control officers respond to calls of stray animals, investigate animal bite cases, trap wildlife that pose a potential danger to the community and investigate reports of animal cruelty. The police department also handles cases of barking dogs and other instances where pets are creating neighborhood problems. Last year, the animal control officers received 8,414 calls for service and captured 2,962 dogs.

Fort Smith limits the number of dogs a resident may keep. Normally, residents may not keep more than four dogs which are older than 5 months. Residents with spayed or neutered dogs may keep up to six canines.

Stray dogs are taken to the Sebastian County Humane Society, 3800 Kelley Highway. The humane society cares for

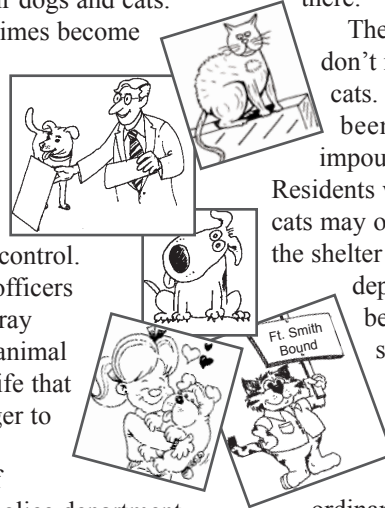
the animals. Pets unclaimed by their owners are made available for adoption. Residents who have lost a pet should contact the humane society at 783-4395 to learn if their dog or cat is being held there.

The animal control officers don't respond to calls about stray cats. The humane society has been authorized as the impoundment facility for cats. Residents who are bothered by stray cats may obtain a humane trap from the shelter for a \$25 refundable deposit. Once a stray cat has been captured, it and the trap should be taken to the humane society.

Rabies can spread quickly through domesticated animals. City ordinance requires all dogs and cats older than six months to be vaccinated against rabies. The vaccination helps prevent the spread of rabies and its devastating consequences to humans and animals.

Animal owners are encouraged to have their dogs and cats spayed or neutered if the pets aren't used for breeding purposes. Altering the pets prevents unwanted litters and problems with pet overpopulation. It also keeps your pet's disposition more manageable.

Residents with questions about Fort Smith's animal control services may contact the police department at 785-4221.



Construction Update on Major Thoroughfare Projects

Fort Smith's prosperity is evidenced by the current and pending construction of four major roadways in the city. Using the one-cent sales tax for streets, bridges and drainage and federal grant funds, the following projects will be under construction as follows:

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED START DATE</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE</u>
* Old Greenwood Rd. Rogers Ave. to Country Club	Sept., 2000	Sept., 2002
* Phoenix Ave. Old Greenwood Rd. to State Line Rd.	Aug., 2001	Dec., 2003
* Massard Rd. Phoenix Ave. to Zero St.	Dec., 2001	Aug., 2003
* Kelley Highway Midland Blvd. to I-540	Jan., 2002	Sept., 2003

LEFT LANE
CLOSED
AHEAD

Music to Your Ears

The paint was barely dry on Fort Smith's new River Park before free, community concerts began in the park. The Times Record newspaper and Clear Channel Radio, both park partners, are sponsoring concert series in the River Park on Thursday and Friday evenings. Admission is free.

The Times Record hosts the Thursday Concerts in the Park series. The concerts began in May and are held each Thursday through September 6th. The Thursday night concerts begin at 6 p.m. and usually end by 8 p.m. Entertainment

varies each week. Watch the Times Record newspaper for announcements.



Clear Channel Radio of Fort Smith is hosting the Downtown Alive concert series on Friday evenings. The Friday

night concerts began in the spring but are currently taking a summer break. Downtown Alive will resume on August 31st and go through October 5th. Concert information is available on Clear Channel Radio stations KMAG, B98, Big Dog 95.9 and KWHN.

Food and beverages are available at each concert. Your purchases help support worthwhile community organizations and their projects.

THE FOCUS encourages all Fort Smithians to enjoy a free concert in the River Park and a magnificent view of the Arkansas River.

Too Much Junk to Haul?

Don't know what to do with your old couch or large roll of carpet?.....Dial-A-Truck is for you!

Residents who have large, bulky items may dispose of them at no additional cost by calling their sanitation service. Bulky items including appliances, couches, tables, chairs, carpet, mattresses, lawn mowers and outdoor grills are typically too large for the regular sanitation trucks.

Bulky items will be collected once every three months. The items must be placed at the curb for pickup. Special arrangements will be made for elderly, persons with disabilities or customers with extenuating circumstances that require special assistance. This service is provided without additional charge for all residents of Fort Smith who pay for sanitation service on their municipal utility bill.

Similar services are offered to City of Fort Smith commercial container customers. All remodeling and construction materials, in addition to the bulky items previously mentioned, may not be placed in 2-, 4-, 6- and 8-yard sanitation dumpsters. Commercial customers can request collection of bulky items

Guess Who's Coming to Town?

THE FOCUS has learned the following new businesses and expansions will soon be opening in Fort Smith.

Arvest Bank	4700 Kelley Hwy.	Nov., 2001
Holiday Inn Express	6813 Phoenix Ave.	Feb., 2002
First National Bank, expansion	5201 Rogers Ave.	Dec., 2001
Linen-N-Things	7751 Rogers Ave.	Oct., 2001
Market Place Restaurant	8302 Phoenix Ave.	Dec., 2001
Katherine's, women's apparel	7803 Rogers Ave.	Oct., 2001
Campus Center, Westark College	5210 Grand Ave.	Sept., 2001
Joel & Barbara Stubblefield Center, Westark College	532 Waldron Rd.	Nov., 2001
Ennen Eye Clinic	3312 S. 70 th St.	Feb., 2002
Splash Car Wash	3410 S. 74 th St.	Sept., 2001
Splash Car Wash	2700 Market Trace	Nov., 2001

All of this growth and development demonstrates the business community's confidence in Fort Smith as a good place to live, work and do business.



that don't fit into commercial containers (excluding construction debris and/or carpeting). Commercial customers may request dial-a-truck service for up to 3 items monthly. There are additional charges for more frequent collections and for more than 3 items.

To schedule a dial-a-truck pickup or for additional information on proper disposal of large bulky items, please call the City of Fort Smith sanitation department at 784-2350. Residential customers south of Zero Street served by Altes Sanitation should call Altes at 646-3890 for dial-a-truck service.

Fair Housing is Your Right !

Fair housing is a right protected by federal and state laws. It means you may freely choose a place to live without regard to your race, color, religion, sex, national origin or because you are disabled or have children in your family. The City of Fort Smith has a fair housing program to assist you in determining if you have been discriminated against in your search for housing. There is no fee for this service.



Fair housing opens doors....but only with your help. Learn to recognize the signs of discrimination in rental, sales, lending and insurance.

How do you recognize discrimination?

Housing discrimination is rarely blatant. It is often disguised with a handshake and a smile. Your rights are violated when you are prevented from doing the following - viewing or renting an apartment - viewing or purchasing a home - applying for or securing a home loan.

The Fair Housing Act protects people with mental retardation, mental illness, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, visual and hearing impairments, AIDS and those who use walkers, wheelchairs, companion animals or a personal care attendant and other disabilities.

You cannot be denied housing simply because you have children. The law

protects pregnant women, families with children, adults serving as guardians for children and those in the process of obtaining legal custody of children.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, take the following steps:

- ✓ Keep a record of any meetings and phone calls with the landlord, property manager, real estate agent, loan officer or insurance agent. Include the person's name, title, the meeting date and time.

- ✓ Write down what happened and what was said by all participants. Save all receipts, applications, leases, business cards, brochures or other documents that you were given.

- ✓ Call the Fair Housing Program at 784-2214 (TTY 784-2491). *This is a voice mail box only.* A call will be returned within one working day.

The Fair Housing Program doesn't arbitrate tenant/landlord disputes unless there's discrimination by race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status. In these instances, you should obtain legal services. If your dispute involves a safety issue, i.e. electrical, plumbing, etc., you may call the building inspection department at 784-2206 and ask for an investigation of your complaint.

The city's fair housing program is here to help protect your rights....call us!!

Ad Space

Fort Smith Welcomes New Parks Director

John W. Dargle, Jr., formerly of Charlotte, NC, has been appointed Fort Smith's director of parks and recreation. He'll replace Charles Raney who's retiring August 31st.

Dargle began his Fort Smith duties on June 25th. He previously worked 6 years for the Mecklenburg County (Charlotte) park district as a general manager and a recreation coordinator. Prior to Mecklenburg County,



Dargle was an officer and medivac helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army.

Dargle holds a bachelor's degree in recreation and leisure services from the State University of New York. He also has certifications from the National Recreation and Parks Association as a park and recreation professional and a playground safety inspector.

In his Fort Smith position, Dargle will oversee operation and maintenance of Fort Smith's 19 parks, community centers, swimming and wading pools, Oak Cemetery and downtown streetscape. He'll also be working to enhance recreation programming for the community. The parks and recreation department's total annual budget is \$2 million.

Dargle, his wife Maureen, and their children Rachel and Jack, have settled into Fort Smith. *THE FOCUS* welcomes parks and recreation director John Dargle, Jr. and his family to Fort Smith.

Grins & Groans



Grins to residents and business people who pick up litter in front of their properties



Groans to motorists who don't slow down for crews working in or near streets.

Employees Receive Statewide Recognition

Two City of Fort Smith employees recently received statewide recognition from their peers.

Director of Engineering **Van Lee** was among 10 engineers elected into the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineering this year. The academy promotes the civil engineering profession and awards scholarships to engineering students. Lee was previously recognized as the 1999 Arkansas engineer of the year by the Arkansas Society of Professional Engineers.

Lee oversees the city's engineering department, which manages the roadway and drainage construction projects funded with the 1 cent sales tax. He holds a B.S. degree in civil engineering from the University of Arkansas and has been the city's director of engineering for 19 years.

Lance McAvoy, environmental chemist for the city of Fort Smith, has been selected as the laboratory analyst of the year by the Arkansas Water Environmental Association. He earned a B.S. degree in chemistry from Arkansas Tech University and has worked in environmental laboratories and consulting for the last 10 years.



The Fort Smith Flyfishers Club and others have proposed the creation of a tailwater trout fishery once Lake Fort Smith has been expanded. The fishery would provide recreational and tourism opportunities not available anywhere else in western Arkansas.

The 3,000' length fishery would be constructed downstream of the new dam. It would rely on continuous cold water releases from the lower depths of Lake Fort Smith to sustain the trout population.

The board of directors has approved design of the outlet works into the Lake Fort Smith dam with two very important conditions. The first is that the cost, estimated at \$420,000, won't be paid with city funds. The board made it clear that Fort Smith rate payers and tax payers shouldn't bear the cost of the trout fishery. The project organizers are raising funds for construction of the fishery.

The second condition is that the flow of water to the fishery could be discontinued whenever the water is needed for supply purposes. This may occur during drought conditions or when the region's water demands grow

to a high enough level that water could no longer be released for the fishery. In the meantime, the trout fishery would provide many years of fishing enjoyment for area residents and tourists.

There's been concern expressed about releasing water for the fishery while the city is asking citizens to conserve water. Fort Smith's water conservation measures are required by the federal permits for the Lee Creek water supply project. With or without the trout fishery, Fort Smith must have water conservation measures. Conservation measures are designed to promote wise use of this natural resource. Operating conditions for the fishery will ensure that the available water supply for the region won't be diminished.

The trout fishery will add a new recreational opportunity for western Arkansans and help promote tourism in the region. A decision on the future of the fishery will be made in December, 2001. If constructed, the fishery should be in service soon after completion of the water supply expansion project in late 2005.



Be Cool & Caring!.....Excessively hot temperatures are dangerous for seniors. Check on the well-being of the elderly in your neighborhood and provide fans for them.

McAvoy oversees the day-to-day operation of the city of Fort Smith's environmental services analytical laboratory. The laboratory is responsible for testing water samples from various stages in the water and wastewater treatment processes. The testing

helps ensure Fort Smith has the highest quality drinking water possible and that Fort Smith's wastewater discharges are complying with state and federal requirements. The city's laboratory is certified by the Arkansas Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency.

These awards affirm that the citizens of Fort Smith are served well by dedicated and highly-qualified city employees. *THE FOCUS* congratulates Van Lee and Lance McAvoy for earning these statewide recognitions.

“Check Out” Your Local Libraries

Fort Smithians’ use of their new public libraries has been tremendous. Since opening in February, more than 70,000 patrons have visited the main library. Almost 39,000 citizens hold a library card.

Library director **Larry Larson** reports that citizens are finding the libraries a wonderful place to enjoy reading, find books, magazines, newspapers, videos, CD’s and cassettes, use a computer or meet with a group.

Use of library services has grown significantly. Computer usage is up over 100% with the increased number of computers available to the public. The youth services department circulates more than 16,000 books monthly, which is more than twice the number of children’s books circulated last year.

The genealogy department is a popular location in the new main library.

There, library patrons have access to data bases and *Ancestors.com* for researching their family trees. Each month, over 1,200 people from across the region use the library’s genealogy department.

School groups are also finding the main library a useful part of their curricula. During the school year, the library provides tours to school groups of all ages. Many of the students return with their parents to further explore the vast offerings of the library.

The new library space has afforded an opportunity to increase the library’s holdings. The libraries have over 200,000 books, more than 3,000 audio cassettes, 3,300 videos and over 1,400 CD’s.

The libraries also offer meeting spaces for community groups and businesses. Over 100 groups meet on a regular basis in one of the many meeting rooms. Rooms can accommodate meetings as large as 140 persons. Rooms for small groups are also available.

The library staff is always ready to help citizens explore what’s available at the libraries. Check out your Fort Smith public libraries today.



VISIT YOUR LIBRARIES TODAY

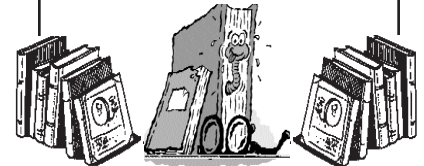
Main Library
3201 Rogers Ave.
783-0229

Dallas Branch
8100 Dallas
484-5650

Miller Branch
8701 S. 28th St.
646-3945

Windsor Branch
4701 Windsor Dr.
785-0405

Or visit them on-line at
www.fspl.lib.ar.us



Fort Smith’s Living History

A significant part of Fort Smith’s past was damaged during the 1996 tornado. Thanks to a \$7.5 million renovation project, the Fort Smith National Historic Site has been substantially refurbished. The site commemorates a significant phase of America’s westward expansion.

Judge Isaac C. Parker’s court room and the jail which held fugitives such as Cherokee Bill and the Rufus Buck Gang are now better than ever. An expanded visitor center, period court furnishings, Native American exhibits and audio/visual media await park goers. The park rangers offer monthly children’s programs, living history presentations and group tours.

The park renovations and improvements have made the

grounds more pedestrian friendly by streetscape additions and burying overhead utility lines. The walls, gates and buildings of the second fort have been depicted. As always, the park’s magnificent view of the Arkansas River offers much splendor.

Park superintendent **Bill Black** reports that attendance at the site is expected to increase significantly this summer. He invites local residents to see what’s new at the park.

The national historic site is a wonderful place to take out-of-town family and friends. Located at South 3rd Street and Garland Avenue, the park is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call the park at 783-3961 or visit its web site at www.nps.gov/fosm.

The WestArk Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is hosting a volunteer recruitment fair on Monday, August 20th from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Central Mall. Fifty local non-profit agencies will have booths to explain their services and to recruit volunteers.

WestArk RSVP provides volunteer opportunities for citizens age 55 and older. The volunteer recruitment fair is open to adults of any age interested in volunteering in Sebastian or Crawford Counties. The goal of the recruitment fair is to attract 500 new volunteers.

Contact WestArk RSVP at
783-4155 or visiting its web-site at
www.WestArkRSVP.com

**Get
Involved.....
Volunteer**

FOCUS ON FORT SMITH

City of Fort Smith
P. O. Box 1908
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

PRSRT-STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FORT SMITH, AR
PERMIT NO. 2

City Board of Directors Meetings

Dates:

First & Third Tuesdays

Time:

6:00pm

Place:

Fort Smith Public Schools Service
Center, 3205 Jenny Lind Rd.,
Building B

Contact number:

784-2208

The public is invited to all meetings.
The public may introduce items
involving city government not listed on
the agenda and may comment on
agenda items.

Fast Facts From Fort Smith's History

★ 1822 Capt. John Rogers, founder of Fort Smith, arrived ★ 1840 Town of Fort Smith organized ★ 1842 Fort Smith was incorporated ★ 1846 First Presbyterian Church established ★ 1851 First school and hospital established ★ 1865 Beginning of reconstruction period for the area ★ 1870 Belle Grove School became 1st public school ★ 1872 First National Bank established ★ 1875 Judge Isaac Parker arrived in Fort Smith ★ 1882 Merchants National Bank organized ★ 1882 Fort Smith Times began publishing 7 days a week ★ 1886 First storm sewer system installed ★ 1887 St. John's Hospital established (changed name to Sparks in 1908) ★ 1891 Missouri & Pacific Railroad bridge over Arkansas River opened ★ 1893 First city library was founded by the Fortnightly Club ★ 1898 Tornado hits Fort Smith claiming 51 lives ★ 1899 First paid fire department established ★ 1900 Fort Smith population was 11,587 ★ 1906 St. Anne's Academy built east of Immaculate Conception Church ★ 1911 Arkansas-Oklahoma State Fair held for first time ★ 1912 Theodore Roosevelt passed through Fort Smith during presidential campaign ★ 1913 Commission form of city government established ★ 1923 Fort Smith Symphony Orchestra organized ★ 1923 Fort Smith became one of first farm clubs for St. Louis Cardinals baseball team ★ 1928 Fort Smith Junior College (now Westark College) officially organized ★ 1930 First radio station began broadcasting ★ 1936 Lake Fort Smith built ★ 1940 Fort Smith airport built ★ 1941 Fort Chaffee construction began ★ 1946 Fort Smith Little Theatre formed ★ 1950 Fort Smith's population was 47,942 ★ 1953 Air National Guard established at municipal airport ★ 1957 Church baseball leagues formed ★ 1961 Twenty-five new industries opened in Fort Smith ★ 1961 Fort Smith National Historic Site established ★ 1967 City administrator form of government established ★ 1969 Completion of Lock and Dam No. 13 ★ 1971 Central Mall opens ★ 1975 President Gerald Ford spoke at new St. Edward Mercy Medical Center dedication ★ 1988 New post office opened on S. 74th St. ★ 1991 Fort Smith Trolley Museum dedicated ★ 1992 Widening of Grand Avenue completed ★ 1996 Tornado hits downtown Fort Smith and north residential area ★ 2000 Fort Smith's population grows to 80,268 ★ 2001 Fort Smith opens main library, convention center and River Park ★

★ Historical facts from *The History of Fort Smith* by J. Fred Patton ★